Amendments to the Claims

The current listing of the claims replaces all previous amendments and listings of the claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for coupling plastic optical fibers, comprising:

providing a holder~~, which includes~~ comprising a groove ~~for holding~~ configured to hold the plastic optical fibers in a longitudinal direction; ~~and~~

abutting ~~and coupling~~ opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers together ~~while causing the holder~~; and

removably disposing a first portion of a clip on a face of the holder and a second portion of the clip on a face of a cover to apply a lateral pressure to the plastic optical fibers ~~therein~~ therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the groove ~~can~~ is configured to encompass a cylindrical space occupying at least 50% ~~or more~~ of an entire outer circumference of ~~each~~ at least one of the plastic optical fibers.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one ~~portion~~ of the plastic optical fibers ~~is made of~~ comprises fluororesin.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein the opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers are abutted and coupled together with~~ further comprising:

interposing a refractive index matching agent ~~interposed therebetween~~ between the opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the groove ~~of the holder has~~ comprises openings at opposite ends of the holder, and the openings have inclined portions, ~~and the opposed end faces of the respective plastic optical fibers are abutted and coupled together by~~ the method further comprising:

introducing the opposed ends of the plastic optical fibers from the openings into the groove in the holder through the inclined portions ~~by use of flexibility of the holder with the lateral pressure preliminarily applied thereto~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein the groove ~~can~~ is configured to encompass a cylindrical space occupying at least 50% ~~or more~~ of an entire outer circumference of ~~each~~ at least one of the plastic optical fibers.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein at least one ~~portion~~ of the plastic optical fibers ~~is made of~~ comprises fluororesin.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 5, ~~wherein the opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers are abutted and coupled together with~~ further comprising:

interposing a refractive index matching agent ~~interposed therebetween~~ between the opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers.

9. (Currently Amended) A ~~plastic optical fiber~~ coupling unit ~~including a coupled portion, the coupled portion formed by providing~~ comprising:

a holder~~, which includes~~ comprising a groove ~~for holding~~ configured to hold plastic optical fibers in a longitudinal direction; and

~~abutting opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers while causing the holder~~ a clip including first and second portions, the clip configured to be removably disposed to contact a face of a cover with the first portion and a face of the holder with the second portion to apply a lateral pressure to the plastic optical fibers ~~therein~~ therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers.

10. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 9, wherein the groove ~~can~~ is configured to encompass a cylindrical space occupying at least 50% ~~or more~~ of an entire outer circumference of ~~each~~ at least one of the plastic optical fibers.

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 9, further comprising:

plastic optical fibers, wherein at least one ~~portion~~ of the plastic optical fibers ~~is made of~~ comprises fluororesin.

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 9, ~~wherein the opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers are abutted and coupled together with~~ further comprising:

a refractive index matching agent ~~interposed therebetween~~ disposed in the groove.

13. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 9, wherein the groove ~~of the holder has~~ comprises openings at opposite ends of the holder, and the openings have inclined portions~~, and the opposed end faces of the respective plastic optical fibers are abutted and coupled together to provide the coupled portion by introducing opposed ends of the plastic optical fibers from the openings into the groove in the holder through the inclined portions by use of flexibility of the holder with the lateral pressure preliminarily applied thereto~~.

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 13, wherein the groove ~~can~~ is configured to encompass a cylindrical space occupying at least 50% ~~or more~~ of an entire outer circumference of ~~each~~ at least one of the plastic optical fibers.

15. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 13, further comprising:

plastic optical fibers, wherein at least one ~~portion~~ of the plastic optical fibers ~~is made of~~ comprises fluororesin.

16. (Currently Amended) The ~~plastic optical fiber~~ unit according to claim 13, ~~wherein the opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers are abutted and coupled together with~~ further comprising:

a refractive index matching agent ~~interposed therebetween~~ disposed in the groove.

17. (New) A coupling unit, comprising:

a holder comprising a groove configured to receive optical fibers;

a cover configured to cover the groove of the holder; and

a removable clip comprising first and second portions configured to urge the holder and the cover together, the first portion configured to contact a surface of the holder and the second portion configured to contact a surface of the cover.

18. (New) The coupling unit according to claim 17, wherein the clip further comprises at least one of a protrusion and a void configured to cooperate with a corresponding void or protrusion of the holder or the cover.

19. (New) The coupling unit according to claim 17, wherein the first and second portions of the clip are configured to contact opposing faces of the holder and the cover.

20. (New) The coupling unit according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the opposing faces of the holder and the cover comprises a protrusion or a void configured to cooperate with a corresponding void or protrusion of the clip.